

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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## SEBASTIAN STROME.

BY JULIAN HAWTHORNE.

### CHAPTER XVII. THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR.

ABOUT ten days after his mishap Fawley examined himself between two looking-glasses, put on a soft hat, and went down to Dene Hall. It was towards the middle of March—one of the soft and lovely days that occasionally visit England at that season. The grass was as vigorously green as if green were a new virtue just arrived from Heaven, and now for the first time displayed for the beatification of the world. Clumps of trees at a little distance had a purplish hue, compounded of the infinite shading of light and dark on the tufted twigs; the roads were brown with moisture (it had rained the night before), and in clayey places strips of glassy water filled the wheel-ruts. The limits of the landscape were swathed in a delicate haze, the dew-laden breath of the awakening earth; and this also caused the lower breadths of the sky to appear of a whitish grey; but higher, the blue gained strength in marvellous gradations, until the zenith looked loftier and more ethereal than on bold summer days. A few pale clouds with undefined edges languished along the eastern quarter of the sky, striving fondly to veil the gathering brightness of the sun, and vanishing in the effort. There was a liquid chirping of birds in the hedges, and now and then a rush of small wings, as a flock of them mounted together at the sound of an approaching footstep, and sought some remote station. Red-hided cattle were planting their split hoofs in the wet turf of the meadows, and laying their broad noses to the herbage with a

crisp sound of cropping, and outbreathings of sweet-smelling satisfaction. How well their level backs and swarthy sides harmonised with the lay of the land, and its mellow tints! As for the high stone wall which surrounded the greater part of Dene Park, it was a spring sermon in itself. At every crevice it exuded lustrous green moss, suggesting the idea that the seeming massive structure was packed full of it, and that the grey surface of stone was but a thin pretence. At its base the grass grew thicker and taller; in shady angles new-fangled spider-webs extended their geometric threads for the harmless capture of dew-drops. The glistening tracks of night-journeying snails crossed each other in wandering patterns, and the snails themselves might sometimes be discerned waving their semi-transparent brown horns this way and that, and advancing with their leisurely one-footed step. Within the park the trunks of the trees in the avenue were stained green on the southern side, and their tough roots lay in snake-like contortions across the path, causing the feet of the unwary to stumble. In openings at the end of long vistas, thin-limbed deer paused and looked. It was a morning sweet with the sounds and scents of awakening life.

This genius of spring has its correspondence in the nature of man, when loving thoughts and impulses begin to stir within him. One whose life has been unselfish and wholesome finds himself in sympathy with the returning season; there is a fresher movement in his blood, and new hopes blossom in his mind. His spirit looks and tends outward, and almost forgets the dull claims of its flesh and bones. He fancies he catches a glimpse of divine

meanings underlying the earthly spectacle, which, could he but retain them long enough, would read him a lesson of profoundest moral truth. God made the earth to answer to the man, and daily she speaks to him in the large language that was understood, perhaps, by them of old time, but is forgotten now, save when some poet spells a word or two, or some lover hears a stray sentence with inspired ears. To mankind at large she is a mystery: only the more enlightened ones understand that she is a derivative of incandescent gases, now far advanced in the cooling process, and sure to be dead some day.

It must be admitted that Selim, although purporting to be a fully-equipped lover, had no further impression from the aspect of nature on this particular morning, than that it was not likely to rain again before he went back to town. He was not accustomed to note the points of correspondence between himself and the created—in distinction from the manufactured—world; the reason probably being that his attention was monopolised by the sensations, desires, and schemes of the first-mentioned part of divine work. Whatever happened, or was likely to happen, in any of the various fields of human interest and endeavour, were of importance to Selim solely in so far as he saw himself personally involved therein, for good or for ill. If he were told that the Countess of Thistledown had eloped with her groom, it set him to thinking how he would have felt and acted in the groom's, or in the earl's, place; if there was a schism in the Established Church, it suggested the question whether he would profit most by siding with this party, or with the other; if war were declared between England and Russia, Selim was anxious to know whether the sufferings or success of the belligerents could be made to subserve the prosperity of his individual pocket. As a man when traversing plains or oceans always finds himself the central figure of the scene, so Fawley in his progress through time and space inevitably referred his environment to a culmination in Fawley. In his active, equally as in his passive phase, the principle remained the same. Fawley was as capable of performing the deeds of charity, for example, as any saint in the calendar; but all his gifts would be patterned after the boomerang; however vigorously he might disseminate them, they were certain from their innate and

essential quality, to return to him with an augmented impetus. In short, Fawley, though appearing and behaving, and even feeling, as one endowed with quite an average amount of decorous and benevolent freedom, was in reality fast-bound to a single fixed idea, from which he would have found it precisely as easy to escape as to jump out of his own skin. This sort of slavery is as subtle as it is secure; the more lightly its fetters are worn, the more remote becomes the possibility of breaking them.

But Fawley was in love; and love, surely, love—the essence of wisdom and the source of all spiritual vitality—must needs be incompatible with so darkened and lifeless a state of being as that which has been portrayed! The difficulty seems to be, that when a person has once allowed himself to become the supreme object in his own regard, any emotion to which he may thereafter pretend is vitiated by the influence of the predominant passion: having closed the unselfish or heavenward approaches of his mind, he is constrained to introduce his heaven-sent guests by avenues opening in the opposite direction; but in penetrating to their destination they get so begrimed and disfigured by the filth and tortuousness of the road, that thenceforward they are no longer angelic but devilish, and thus, at all events, in harmony with their new quarters. Or, to adopt a less figurative mode of statement, if Fawley is said to love Mary Dene, we mean no more than that he has chosen her as the arena for the indulgence of certain of his selfish ends and pleasures; he has made her a means of being more selfish than he could have been without her. As the desire of a genuine love is to give, so that of a love of the opposite kind is to take; and when it has taken all there is to be had, it necessarily comes to an end. That it does so come to an end, and quickly too as a general thing, is possibly the best practical argument that can be urged against it; for there is no doubt that it is tolerably agreeable while it lasts. But it has, at best, only the resources of a single human being to draw upon; whereas the nobler passion is supported by all the inexhaustible wealth of the divine kingdom.

Mary Dene had been forewarned of Fawley's visit, and had prepared herself for it. Her experience of love, thus far, had been purely in the world of the imagination: or at all events, if she herself had loved truly, she was yet without practical experience

of the sensation of being truly loved. It may well be doubted, however, whether the one is really possible apart from the other. Though true love gives, it must be provided with something on which to bestow its gifts; and the only thing that can fully and worthily receive it, is the heart that can give back like measure as it receives. This mutual reaction is, indeed, so indispensable an element in the matter, that without it, or a plausible semblance of it, love must go out like the flame of a lamp that is without oil. For the reaction causes growth; and love postulates growth; when it stops growing it is dead—as would be the case with any other living thing, spiritually considered. It can stand still no more than it can go back.

But Mary had loved an ideal? It may be doubted, again, whether such love is love at all, or anything but a sentimental phantasy of the mind. Religious love is not ideal, as those probably know who have experienced it; but, on the contrary, the most real and practical of loves—not a fulfilment of preconceived notions, but a substantial experience of facts that could not have been preconceived. The shadowy fancy of a young woman or man for the mate whom they have never met, or, having met, have mis-known and misinterpreted—this is ideal love properly speaking; and it has, in itself, no more positive influence on the soul than any midsummer night's dream. If it leads to ugly revelations and to disenchantment, these effects may indeed be positive enough; but they in nowise conduce towards rescuing from its negative condition the sentiment which gave them birth. Upon the whole, then, it may safely be affirmed that Mary Dene had never felt the inward fire of an actual human love; had she done so, indeed, it is very certain that she would not have engaged herself to Selim Fawley. She had made acquaintance with a phantom; and when it confessed itself phantasmal, she had formed the conclusion that all in that kind must be phantoms likewise, and therefore no longer to be either loved or feared.

In this frame of mind she made ready to meet the man who was to become her husband. She did not fear him, for she could not comprehend all the significance of the power which marriage would give him over her—a power altogether unrelated to the comparative force of their respective characters; for a woman is a woman, were she a very Semiramis, and can no more

protect herself from the man whom social laws have given authority over her, than she could avoid drowning at the bottom of a pool of water. She did not love him, either; but, besides having done her best to put in practice Mrs. Strome's theory that the "neighbourly love" of Scripture might be applied to fill this gap, she had gone far towards persuading herself that she entertained a tolerable liking for Selim personally, and that the more accustomed she got to the idea of living with him, the more confirmed this liking would become. The news of the bodily violence that he had suffered affected her singularly. I am not prepared to deny that, for an instant, and in some obscure recess of her heart, a feeling may not have harboured of unregenerate regret that the blow had not been a little harder—just "six ounces more," as the surgeon had phrased it, and so an end of all trouble, and Selim himself saved from much present pain and possible future inconvenience. But she did not allow this passing thought to develop into a recognised wish; she set her foot upon it and crushed it down, until its sinister wriggings had ceased. Her next sensation partook rather of pleasurable anticipation than of anything else; not that she rejoiced in Selim's sufferings—she would have been incapable of that in the case of her worst enemy—but that she saw in it an opening for the exercise of all those tender and patient ministrations, whereby good women contrive not so much to endear themselves to their patients, as to endear their patients to themselves. Mary did not need a poet to tell her that pity is akin to something warmer than mere liking; and she built up for herself an unselfish romance—a vision of a man broken in strength and health, and refined and elevated by the discipline of pain, served and tended by a woman compassionate and gentle, who, by dint of her unweariable devotion, would gradually cause to grow between them such bonds of silent sympathy and mutual understanding, as might at last issue in an affection not unworthy of her earlier dreams. It was a true maiden vision, high-minded, pure, and little apt to be realised; although no one who has had experience of the miracles which women can accomplish, would venture rashly to assert that realisation was impossible.

Be that as it may, Mary had worked herself up, on the faith of her project, to such a pitch of gladsome hopefulness, that by the time Selim was due at the Hall she



began to fear lest her excess of good spirits might be misinterpreted by him who was the occasion of it. In honour of the warm spring morning she was dressed in white, with black ribbons at her throat and round her wonderful hair. The sleeves of her dress left her white wrists bare; on her finger she wore, for the first time, the ring that Selim had given her on their betrothal: an opal in a setting of jet. She walked about the house humming to herself the tune of some old-fashioned, melodious hymn: she was proficient in no other sort of music; and ever and anon breaking off, both in the tune and in her walk, and standing with open-eyed preoccupation before the viewless creations of her own fancy. At length the sunshine, co-operating with the sanity and freshness of her physical instincts, constrained her to leave the house and breathe the freer air outside: she went into the old Queen Anne garden, and soon found occupation there in training up against the wall a dilapidated rose-bush. Meanwhile she talked learnedly with the Scotch gardener, asking him shrewd questions, weighing critically his replies, and making him feel, not only that she was the best and cleverest of mistresses, but that he himself was an inspired horticulturist in every respect capable of doing her credit.

"Aweel, my leddy," he ventured to remark presently, "I'se right glad to see ye looking sae hearty the morn. Ye hae been hardly your ain good sel' for mony a day syne."

"The fact is, you see, Duncan," returned the heiress, turning her face upon him with a smile and a flush, "I expect my lover to come here this morning." She said this lightly and gaily, and with a playfully confidential tone; but the next moment she reflected that the old gardener had a rather unadaptable mind, which might happen to make a mistake between the new and the old order of things; so she added, in a somewhat forced voice, while her face became grave again: "I mean Mr. Selim Fawley, whom you have seen."

"Mr. Fawley, is it? Ou, ay, I ken the gentleman: and a fair-spoken, weel-favoured body he is too, and unco civil in his manners. But," added the venerable Duncan, who seemed to have exhausted his stock of eulogy in the above sentences, and to feel it upon his conscience to touch the other side of the question, "if I may tak the freedom to speak my mind to your leddyship, he'll be no siccan a one as the

Laird your father, that's dead and gone. Hegh! there was a mon!"

"No, Duncan; he's not like my father, certainly. I could not expect to marry a man like Sir Hubert. And it is not necessary."

"Weel, weel, we'se no dispute that e'enow," said the gardener, a trifle put out, perhaps, at the manner in which his hint was disposed of. "And sae your leddyship's content, it's nae for ither to mak a clash about it. But there's ain thing I wad like to ken, if it's no speerin too far, and that's whether Mr. Fawley or yoursel' will be maister o' Dene Hall when he comes here to bide?"

"What an absurd question, Duncan!" exclaimed Miss Mary, half amused and half embarrassed. "What difference can it make to you?"

"Aiblins no sae muckle, after a'," returned the Scotchman cautiously. "But your leddyship maun ken I'se an auld mon e'enow, and an unco while it is I'se lived in your service; and I'm thinking it wad gar me feel queerly to be taking my orders frae onybody that didna bear the name o' Dene: mair by token if he's ane o' they Jew bodies (begging your leddyship's pardon) that crucified the blessed Saviour awhile syne. And dinna ye think, your ain sel, my leddy," continued he persuasively, "that ye'd find it a bit vex and grief to ye to be yoked thegither wi' the likes o' him, and——"

"Duncan, you are neglecting your work in order to talk very foolishly about what you don't understand," interrupted Mary with severity, and with the flush spreading over her cheeks. "Mr. Fawley is not a Jew exactly, but if you are so very particular that you cannot put up with any master of this house unless you are allowed to choose him yourself—if you wish to leave me, after having lived here so many years as you say, just at the time when I am going to—to think of marrying somebody—of course you can go; and all the gardeners can go, and all the servants in the house, if they like, with either their month or their money, whichever they prefer!"

She had by this time talked herself into something very like a passion, much to Duncan's surprise and dismay; for he had meant no more than to give his mistress a piece of friendly advice, which he had long been carrying about with him, but had never before found so good an opportunity to get delivered of; and it was by no means his



intention to let the question of the "Jew body's" installation at Dene Hall affect his own position there. On the contrary, he, in common with all the other old retainers of Sir Hubert's time, had conceived so staunch an affection for the young heiress that nothing short of being forcibly ejected from the premises would have induced any one of them to forsake her. Therefore Duncan would cleave to her faithfully, and in case of need defend her even against her own perversity. But, meanwhile, he perceived the futility of trying to influence her by what he called hints: the only thing to be done was to act, and the time for action had not yet arrived.

So he began an apology; but Mary was not in a mood of forgiveness, apparently, for she walked off and left him in the midst of it. Duncan saw her no more, and very soon afterwards the front door bell rang, and he knew that Fawley had arrived.

Mary's first thought on seeing her lover was, that he had improved in appearance and expression: that is, he looked thinner, paler, and older; and as she would have expressed it, more manly. She was not an admirer of red-and-white comeliness in the masculine sex; and Fawley's habitual aspect of well-fed prosperity had always been irksome to her. On the other hand, the loss of his hair revealed certain irregularities in the shape of his cranium that were not altogether promising; but Mary was not a phrenologist, and would not allow herself to be disturbed by trifles. Besides, her attention was immediately attracted by a kind of nervous twitching of the mouth and eyebrows which she had never observed in him before, and which was manifestly a result of the blow and shock he had received. Poor fellow, how terribly he must have suffered! Her heart was stirred with a compassion which (as being in accordance with what she had hoped to feel) she was only too ready to indulge. Her feeling was so cordial, therefore, that almost before she knew what was happening, Fawley had kissed her very near her mouth. She tried to look as if she did not mind it, though this was the first time he had succeeded in doing such a thing; but he continued to hold both her hands, and to gaze into her face in such a way that she could not but show her confusion. The evidences of it did not, however, appear to distress her lover in the least; on the contrary, they plainly delighted him; there was a peculiar glisten

in his small, tenacious eyes that made her feel short of breath. And he kept squeezing her hands and then partly relaxing his clasp in a manner that she somehow felt was unjustifiable, even in view of the bond between them. She dreaded, moreover, lest he should discover the betrothal ring upon her finger, and thereby be impelled to renewed demonstrations; and though she had put it on that morning especially to give him pleasure, she now resolved to take it off again at the earliest opportunity. And all the time there was a voiceless altercation going on in her mind: "I cannot bear it—he has no right to look at me and to touch me so!" "You must—you must! All women must bear it from their betrothed lovers!" "I cannot! he stifles me! I could like him at a distance—but not so near!" "You must! You fool, what do you expect?" "I must have time, then—let it be gradually, not all at once!" "One time is like another; you must yield to him—it is his right!" But all things must come to an end at last—even the raptures of men like Fawley; and sooner or later he was seated in a chair sufficiently removed from Mary to enable her to draw a free breath. But she had felt his influence from head to foot.

"It seems such ages since I saw you, dearest!" she found that he was saying, after a while: she did not know how long he might have been talking previously. "You don't know how I have longed for you! I feel lost when we're apart; and such a terrible experience as I have had, too! Such brutality!"

"Oh, yes, indeed!" returned she, glad that he was got upon this topic, though she had hardly expected him to do his own bemoaning so loudly. "I have been thinking about you a great deal—about it in connection with you. I am so glad of the chance it gives me to—I mean, of course, I shall be so glad if I can help to relieve your suffering. You suffer a great deal, don't you?"

"No one knows what I suffer!" Fawley replied, with a dismal gesture. "Don't I show it? Don't you see the traces of it in me?"

That involuntary twitch passed across his face as he spoke. Mary wondered whether he was conscious of it. "Oh, yes, indeed!" she murmured again, in a tone of such sincere commiseration that Fawley was a trifle disconcerted; for though he wished to be bewailed and petted, he did not quite care to be told that his good-looks

and bodily vigour were for ever blasted. To be an interesting invalid for a reasonable length of time would satisfy him, just long enough for the petting to become a habit not easily to be discontinued. He had never confronted the idea that his injuries were actually so serious as he gave them out to be—that he would, in sad earnest, never be his own man again. Hence the tone in which Mary spoke alarmed him; and in the hope of being contradicted, he said, "I shall never get over it, I suppose; I shall be a wreck all my life!"

"Yes, I suppose so," Mary assented readily, and, as it appeared to Fawley, almost complacently. In truth, they were playing at cross-purposes: she, quite unsuspecting of the ambiguous intention of his complaints, and finding them accord with her own preconceived notions, responded to them solely from her own point of view—which was that of the nurse pleased with the prospect of abundant occupation. Fawley now tried a change of base. "To be sure I have a wonderful constitution," said he; "and that's in my favour." Here the twitch came once more. Mary made no reply; she seemed to have lapsed into a reverie.

"Don't you think so?" he demanded at length, rather petulantly.

Mary emerged from her abstraction with a long indrawing of the breath, and a slow concentration of gaze upon him. "You need not take that tone with me, Selim," she said gravely.

"How do you mean? What tone?"

"Making light of what has happened to you. You forget that you wrote me the truth about it in your letter; though the reality seems to be worse even than that had led me to expect. Why should you try to make me believe against the evidence of my eyes? If you think that your always being an invalid will make me care any less for you, you do me injustice. It is the other way. And I shall be glad, for my own sake, to be always helping you in your weakness. I think perhaps it is Providential, to make us get on together better. If you were to be no more dependent on me than other husbands are on their wives, there would be less chance of our—happiness!"

Fawley was now thoroughly discomposed, and the signs of his discomposure were unpleasantly visible in the nervous exaggeration of his movements. "Upon my word you talk very coolly!" he began, with an attempt at a laugh. "I'm not so

far gone as you seem to think. I shall be all right again presently. Most men would have been killed by such a blow as I got—but you see I'm about again only ten days after. I walked over here from the station, and I don't feel tired. You don't know what a constitution I've got! As for being an invalid all my life, I've no idea of it, I can tell you! Not even for the sake of being tended by your fair hands, my dear—he, he, he! Of course I can see, you don't mean it—you're only trying to bluff me; but you mustn't carry the joke too far; for I am confoundedly nervous still—I admit that! It's only what might be expected, after such a shock as that: I was insensible, you know, for ever so long. But I shall be perfectly right again in a few weeks, at most. Don't you think so? You don't really think it's anything serious—anything that will last? Oh, Mary, you don't really, do you?"

Mary Dene's eyes had been kindling more and more as this disjointed harangue went on; it took her entirely by surprise, not only by what it was in itself, but by the light it let in on Fawley's hitherto unrevealed character. Indignation, contempt, disgust—which was uppermost in the look she bent upon him?

But she made a great inward struggle, and crushed down these feelings. She had made up her mind not merely to endure Fawley, but to accept him and minister unto him with at least a neighbourly kindness and charity: and she must not falter from this purpose because, at the first trial, the task put on a repulsive aspect. She had not undertaken it with the expectation of finding it agreeable.

"I hardly know what to say," she replied at last. "You seem to contradict yourself in a strange way. You told me you had been very much hurt, and you look as if you had been; and yet you seem to think, or to wish to think, that you are not so much hurt after all. How am I to understand you?"

"Oh, you are too hard on me! You make no allowances for the little foibles of human nature," rejoined Fawley with an accent of plaintive reproach—to which he also endeavoured, though without much success, to impart a humorous flavour. "A fellow likes to be sympathised with and petted in his misfortunes by the girl he's in love with; but he doesn't expect to be taken too seriously. I may have exaggerated a little—I suppose I did: there's no harm in that! But for you to come

down on me this way, and give me up as a broken-down invalid for the rest of my days, I vow it's too severe! I shouldn't mind it if I were up to my average condition; but when I'm all run down this way, it's enough to make a fellow lose all hope!"

"Hope—of what?"

"There you go again! Of course I hope to be all right again before long!"

"I wish you would be simple and straightforward with me, Selim," Mary said in an appealing tone—she felt ready to cry. "I am not clever enough to comprehend these double meanings of yours. Did you tell me what you thought was not true about yourself only so that—so that I might like you better?"

"Well, you do make me out an awful criminal! But who wouldn't commit even blacker crimes than that to gain the affection of a lovely woman?"

"Please don't speak so to me, just at this moment. I don't want to make you out a criminal, Selim—Heaven knows it! No, I suppose there was no great harm in what you did, though it does not seem a very noble way of winning a woman's love. I would have tried to love you without that; though, as I said, I thought your sickness had perhaps been sent as a means of drawing us nearer together. Let me understand you clearly then: you believe that you may recover from the effects of this shock, some day?"

"Some day? Yes, in a month's time, most likely! What makes you look at me that way?—as if I had one foot in the grave! I vow I can't stand it!"

"I was feeling very sorry for you, that's all!" Mary said in a slightly tremulous voice. "I was not thinking how I looked."

Selim got up from his chair with a scared and almost wild expression in his face, which was deadly pale.

"I can't stand it!" he repeated; "you make me feel as if I might be going to die! Can't you say you think I'll get well?"

His agitation made Mary feel the necessity of maintaining her own self-possession.

"What can I know about it?" she said as soothingly as she could. "I am not a doctor."

"You do know! you do know! I can see it in your eyes! Damnation! don't torture me so!" he exclaimed, with a sort of shriek breaking through the last words. He shook his hands, with the fingers hooked and rigid, on each side of his head. The man was plainly carried away

by mere nervous terror, which was increased (if not actually occasioned) by the perception he retained of its being itself an indication of his nervous collapse. Mary felt that he was on the brink of an insane paroxysm. She did not fear for herself; her only thought was, so far as might be possible, to compose and soothe Fawley. She rose slowly, keeping her face turned upon him, charged with an expression of gentle and sympathetic compassion. She moved towards him, with her arms partly extended, and attempted to take his quivering hands in hers. But he shrank back from her, his features all contorted; and coming in contact with a sofa, he cowered down upon it, motioning her away, as one might repel a spectre.

"You are not afraid of me, Selim—of your wife that is to be?" she said with a grave smile, which cost her much.

"Keep away from me—keep away!" he cried in the husky, pithless voice of hysteria. "You want to be the death of me—he, he, he! I won't stand it! I'm as well and strong as any man—as I ever was! I was lying—I don't care who knows it—I was lying! Lots of money—I've made over twenty thousand pounds! I'm going to live and enjoy it—I'll enjoy everything!—he, he, he! Such a wife, too! You—yes, I mean you! Can't you say I'll get well? Say it! Never mind lying—he, he! A little lie won't hurt anybody! Mary! Ma—ary! I look all right, don't I? Oh, you devil! Oh, you devil! you want to kill me! You want Sebastian Strome! You shan't—I'll outlive him! Don't believe him, he's a liar! I can marry whom I choose! Pure as purity—he, he, he! Oh, oh! my head! What are they doing? Mary——"

"Hush!" she said, suddenly and imperiously.

"We heard such a laughing and talking," said the amiable voice of Aunt Sophia in the doorway, "I thought we might venture to come in. I've brought you Doctor Stemper, dear—Oh, my God! what's the matter with him?"

"Eh?—who?—what?" demanded the cheerful doctor, coming forward. "Hullo! sure enough! Got a fit—eh? Got a fit; that's it! Pressure on brain most likely. Look here one of you! run for a little hartshorn, that's a good soul! Bring him round directly! No danger—not a bit—all right!"

"Painful thing for you, my dear—eh?"



Disagreeable thing—what?" said the doctor sympathetically to Mary, as he bade her farewell a couple of hours later. Fawley had been put to bed, and was now asleep, with a prospect of waking up comparatively restored. "Unpleasant things fits till you get used to them!"

"It was the effects of that blow, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes—partly that: must have had some previous trouble with the brain though—years ago, may be; those things crop out when you don't expect 'em. Oh, he'll be right as a trivet by this evening! Avoid excitement, over-exertion—all that sort of thing—eh? Keep his aunt out of the way. I'll call in again to-morrow. Come, brighten up, my dear child! Can't have you ill too—eh? No, no, that would never do! Brighten up!"

"Thank you, I'm very well," returned Mary, with an indifferent tone and smile. "I feel a little polluted, that's all; I shall soon get used to it. Good-bye till to-morrow, then!" She watched him climb into his gig and drive away.

When Doctor Stemper got a little way down the avenue, he fetched his quiet-going mare such a lash with the whip as well-nigh destroyed her trust in human nature. She jumped forward at fifteen miles an hour; the doctor reined her in savagely, and then lashed her once more. What could he have been thinking of?

#### ALDERSHOT REVISITED.

FOUR years ago I gave in this journal an account of a visit I had just paid to Aldershot.\* Being anxious to see an old friend in the camp, and also, as in 1875, wanting to answer the question, "What is truth?" with regard to certain matters concerning the army, which are now agitating the public mind, I determined to revisit what may be called the real head-quarters of the British army, and judge for myself as to the actual condition of our regiments and soldiers. Towards the end of July, the termination of what military men call the drill season, is an exceptionally good time to visit the camp. Cavalry and infantry, militia and volunteers, artillery and engineers—every branch of the service is, more or less, represented at this period. It is true that the auxiliary forces, as the militia and volunteers are

called, are few in numbers when compared to the other branches of the service, but still they put in an appearance, which gives the looker-on a very fair idea as to what they are, and in what respects they can be compared, favourably or otherwise, with their comrades of the regulars.

As a place of residence, more particularly for officers belonging to the staff, Aldershot has improved wonderfully during the last few years. The camp has lost in a great measure that hard, new, gravelly look which it had even so lately as the year 1875. There are trees of a fair growth, flowers, and a general green, fresh look about the locale which contrasts very favourably with what I recollect less than half a decade ago. In and about the residences of the staff this is particularly visible, and must do away to a great extent with the hard, pipeclay, regulation feeling which every one connected with the camp used to complain of in former years; but, as on the occasion of my previous visit to the place, my business was more with those who lived in the camp, and for whose use and training it is kept up, than within the camp itself.

As a soldier would say, I began with the right of the line, and by an officer of artillery was taken through the barracks, stables, and batteries of his corps. I need hardly observe that here I found everything as nearly perfection as it is possible to be. The horses, harness, guns, tumbrils, and all belonging to this wonderfully fine regiment, were all that could be desired. The men were preparing to turn out for a field day which was to come off that afternoon. They, one and all, seemed to take a pride in their work that was only equalled by the pride that their officers appeared to take in the corps and all that belonged to it. Neither amongst the gunners or drivers could I see any man who looked under age, or who was not fully up to the work he had before him. To say that the men were clean and soldierlike, or that the horses were well groomed, is to give but a feeble idea of the condition in which the artillery at the camp appeared to be. Nor did there appear to be any vacancies in the ranks. An artillery officer to whom I was introduced told me that the number of men in each troop of horse and battery of field guns was complete, and that those who had a place in the ranks were, one and all, thoroughly drilled and up to the mark. And as in an hour or so I witnessed the most part of the corps, I certainly

\* ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, Vol. 14, page 391, "The Army at Aldershot."

came to the conclusion that nothing could be finer or more soldierlike in every possible way. In two, and only in two, items was I a little disappointed with this branch of the service. The one was the persistency with which the authorities adhere to the muzzle-loading guns; the other the very partial adoption of the new helmet, which is so very much more soldierlike and workmanlike than the old theatrical busby, a head-dress which ten years' experience in a hussar regiment taught me to be the most unserviceable covering which a soldier could possibly wear. Our horse artillery would look ten times better if they wore the helmet, and would moreover have something like a real protection for the head against sun, rain, and all that has to be guarded against when in the field. The busby is, as ladies call it, "a very pretty" head-dress, and to some men it is very becoming; but on either a very hot or a very wet day, if the wearer of it is not betrayed into occasional very bad language, he must be a better Christian and a better tempered man than ever I was. As regards the muzzle-loading guns, not being an artilleryman, I suppose it is only right to give in to those who have studied the question. But having witnessed during the Franco-German war some half-dozen or more pounding matches between the breech-loaders of the Prussians and the muzzle-loaders of the French, I cannot help thinking that in the—not very probable, but still possible—event of a war between ourselves and any European power, our artillery would get very much the worst of any conflict of the kind. The grouse or partridge shooter who uses a breech-loading fowling-piece, has no small advantage over one who uses a muzzle-loader. And what is artillery in the field but game shooting on a large scale?

Of the cavalry at Aldershot, consisting of the Second Life Guards, Fifth Dragoon Guards, Eleventh and Eighteenth Hussars, it is also very difficult to speak in too high praise. The discipline of the stables; the quarters of the men; the grooming of the horses; the saddlery; the riding of the troopers; the manner the horses were bitted and broken in; the accoutrements; and everything belonging to these corps left certainly little or nothing to be desired. One change, however, I would, had I my own way, make in the head-dress of these corps; I would give them, one and all, the newly-introduced helmet. The metal helmet of the Household Brigade and

Dragoon Guards is far too heavy and cumbersome; the lancer cap and busby are both much too high for mounted men to wear, and are not sufficiently workmanlike in their appearance. In India all our cavalry regiments—heavies, lancers, and hussars—wear the same head-dress—namely, a white-covered pith helmet, which is admirably suited to the climate. We have introduced in England a dark-covered helmet which is by far the most soldierlike and workmanlike head-dress that has ever been seen in the service. It not only improves immensely the personal appearance of the men, but also makes them look when they wear it as if they meant business, and were no mere parade soldiers. Why not make this helmet universal throughout the service?

Another—the only other—fault to be found with our cavalry regiments is that they are not strong enough in numbers. At Aldershot none of the corps present could muster three hundred mounted men on parade. To be of any real use in a campaign that lasts beyond a very few weeks, cavalry corps should be at least double the strength; and ought to be composed of eight troops of say eighty horses each, making four squadrons of a hundred and sixty sabres each, from which would have to be deducted a certain number of recruits and young horses, but which, as a rule, should never have less than six hundred effective troopers on the ranks. At the present time, with nine cavalry regiments in India and two at the Cape, there are twenty mounted corps in the United Kingdom, including the three forming the household brigade. These taken together give a total of about six thousand two hundred troopers, of which at least four hundred or five hundred must be put down as non-effectives—men who have not gone through their drill and school, and young horses not yet admitted into the ranks. If our cavalry were wanted for any real work, what could we do with a force so defective in numbers, perfect as they are in quality? It should be remembered that a cavalry soldier is not made in a day. The trooper requires at least two full years—rather more than less—and his horse quite as long before they are fitted to take their places in the ranks.

I wish I could speak of the infantry of the line that I saw at Aldershot in the same terms of praise as I can of the artillery and cavalry. I had heard at the clubs, and read in the daily papers, not a

little about the youthful unformed lads who filled the ranks of our battalions, and of the paucity in numbers of each such corps. But without having seen for myself, I could never have realised how far short of the actual truth were even the most unfavourable comments that had come to my notice regarding this branch of the service. Remembering what our infantry corps used to be but very few years ago, I could hardly believe my own eyes. The old type of the British foot soldier—the tough looking, wiry man of twenty-five to thirty-five or forty years of age, who looked fit and ready to go anywhere and do anything—was nowhere to be seen; he was replaced by mere lads, or rather boys, wanting alike in military appearance and in manly stamina. That these might make good soldiers after three or four years good living, regular hours, and barrack discipline, I admit. But that they were at present fit for anything save barrack yard drill, and perhaps one night of guard duty in the week, I deny. It was only after seeing three or four of these infantry regiments pass that I began to understand, and—I am sorry to say—to believe in a paragraph I had read a day or two before in a well known military newspaper,\* describing the present condition of two distinguished regiments, now at the seat of war. It was not with such men as these that the wonderful marches of twenty-five and thirty miles on end, were made during the great Indian mutiny; nor with such regiments would General Nott, during the second Afghan campaign, have been able to push on night and day towards Cabool as he did. I declare that during that fine, cool, breezy day at Aldershot, I saw many more men fall out of the ranks from sheer exhaustion, than it was ever my fate to witness during a field day in India, when the power of the morning sun began to be felt, and the heat of the previous night had kept most of us from sleeping. In their persons, accoutrements, clothing, &c., the men seemed clean and smart; the old tradition of the British soldier was not yet a dead letter amongst them. But a dozen, or fewer, years ago—before the limited en-

listment system began to bear fruit—these lads would, if admitted at all into the ranks, have been still with the recruits. Every man who has served in the army knows that it takes at least a couple of years, or even more, to make fit and able soldiers of the class from which our army is chiefly recruited. Here, however, were mere boys, who with very rare exceptions had been ill-fed and badly cared for from their childhood upwards, taking their place as trained soldiers in the ranks.

An officer of some twenty years' experience in regimental work, and of ten years on the staff, with whom I spoke on the subject when returning in the train to London, told me that ever since the short enlistment, and the practice of sending all soldiers who had completed a few years in the service to the reserve had come into operation, our infantry regiments had been gradually deteriorating in quality as well as quantity. He told me that with the exception of three battalions—viz., the first battalion Second Regiment, the Twenty-sixth and Twenty-eighth Regiments—there was not now at present in the United Kingdom a single corps that was efficient for field service; and that according to an official return presented to the House of Commons on the first of June last, there are now on home service no fewer than fifteen regiments who could only turn out, on an average, one and a half effective war companies each. And yet, to quote from a daily paper which is by no means likely to make matters worse than they actually are, "it is anticipated that by the time the accounts for the current year are closed, the net military expenditure for the twelve months will be a little over sixteen million pounds";\* having risen from fourteen million five hundred and thirty-eight thousand seven hundred pounds for the year 1877-8, and from fifteen million five hundred and ninety-five thousand eight hundred pounds for the year 1878-9,† in none of which sums, be it fully understood, are the extra expenses incurred by the Afghan or the Zulu wars included.

During a sojourn of several hours at Aldershot I met with many old friends, with some of whom I had served, and gone through two campaigns in a very different climate from that in which we now met. Without a single exception I found all these gentlemen of opinion that the present

\* We learn from an officer of rank and experience, who is now serving (at the Cape) with General Crealock's division, that at an inspection at the end of May, the Ninety-ninth presented the appearance of a lot of weakly boys, quite unfit for any real work. The Eighty-eighth contains also many sickly, weakly boys, but having as yet undergone little exposure or hardship, this corps is the healthiest in the division.—Army and Navy Gazette, 19th July, 1879.

\* See Standard, February 21, 1879.

† See Parliamentary Debates, February 20, 1879.



state of our army, and more particularly of our infantry, was most deplorable, and had been going from bad to worse ever since the short enlistment scheme began to show forth its fruit. When I asked how, in so comparatively short a time, the extra force required for the Cape last February was got together, I was told a story, which—although true to the very letter, and shown to be so by returns which have been prepared by the War Office and presented to parliament—I could scarcely credit. To make a long, and somewhat intricate, tale short and plain, it seems that on the occasion referred to, we despatched to the Cape the first battalion Twenty-first Regiment, the Fifty-eighth Regiment, the third battalion Sixtieth Rifles, the Ninety-first and the Ninety-fourth Regiments—in all five corps; and these, be it noted, were the first five on the ranks for foreign service. These regiments ought to have numbered one thousand each; as it was they averaged only eight hundred and eighty-eight rank and file per battalion, or about four thousand four hundred and forty men in all. But even of these four thousand, upwards of one thousand—more than twenty-five per cent.—were for one reason and another unfit for service, and their numbers had to be made up from regiments remaining at home. Thus each commanding officer on an average had under him a fifth of the regiment of whom he knew nothing—utter strangers to himself, to the other officers, and to their own comrades in the ranks. And even then each regiment had to sail with about two hundred men, or twenty per cent., who were under twenty years of age, and who had not yet been a year in the army—youths who, if at the very first had to go through really hard work, particularly if accompanied by short or indifferent rations, would inevitably break down, and have to go to hospital. No wonder then that, with very few exceptions, our infantry regiments now in England may be considered as utterly ineffective.\*

As to what has brought about this most lamentable state of affairs? To answer that question in full would take up far more space than can be allowed for any

single paper in this periodical. Suffice it to say that shortly after the Franco-German war, many of our military men were attacked with a complaint which may be, for want of a better name, called "the German army on the brain." They determined to assimilate everything in our own service as near as possible to the practice of Prussia. Hence the limited enlistment, the institution of reserves, and other practices; which were after all only a very bad imitation of what they wanted to see carried out in our service. They forgot that in Germany every adult of a certain age must serve in the army; that the people as a rule seldom or never move from the village in which they were born; that our working classes are, with rare exceptions, wanderers over the face of the earth; and that to enlist mere lads, and keep them but a few years in the ranks, is simply to deteriorate our once very fine army without a chance of replacing the men we lose. The Germans have no Colonial service, the French have little or none. In England, on the contrary, our service is almost entirely Indian and Colonial, regiments at home being merely, as it were, depôts, of which each in its turn will go to India, South Africa, or some other far off land. In Continental armies they want men to defend their respective frontiers; in England we require nothing of the kind. We may mobilise our militia and volunteers, because, as a rule, they serve exclusively at home. But to mobilise our regular regiments, who are here to-day and on their way to the antipodes to-morrow, is simply an absurdity. As the Duke of Cambridge said, when returning thanks for the toast of the Army, at a dinner given by the Fishmongers' Company, on Wednesday the 30th April, "we hear people talking of localising our army; but surely any man who says that does not know what he is speaking about. A localised army must remain at home; but the army of England is abroad, excepting depôts at home for keeping up the strength of the regiments on foreign service. That is the case not only in times of war, but in times of peace. The impression seems to have got abroad that we can imitate foreign armies, but the circumstances are perfectly different."\* If this common-sense view of the question had been taken by the military advisers of the War Office six or seven years ago, the results would

\* Four years ago I wrote in this journal that there was then "the germ of a good and efficient army to be found at Aldershot" (ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, Vol. 14, page 394, "The Army at Aldershot"). This was in July, 1875, but in July, 1879, that germ seems to have vanished entirely.

\* See Times, May 1, 1879.

not have been what I have endeavoured to depict—an army wanting more than half its proper number of men; and those who are in the ranks being mere unformed, half-fed lads, unfit for anything like hard work or service in the field.

In the cavalry and artillery, although, in a certain measure, the same rules of enlistment hold good, things are very much better than in the infantry. The men who take service in these corps are of a better class; and the officers who select the recruits have a greater number, a greater variety to select from. It takes longer too to form a gunner or dragoon than an infantry soldier; and it would seem that the longer a man remains in the service the more he likes it, and the less likely he is to claim, or ask for, his discharge. In the mounted corps, the non-commissioned officers are, as a rule, a much older set of men than in the infantry, and have much more authority over the men they command.

From all I saw and heard at Aldershot the immense majority of the sergeants and corporals in our infantry regiments can now be no longer called, as they used to be, "the backbone of the army." They are, both in years, habits, and authority, but one degree removed from the lads who are now styled soldiers. By persons who do not know what the real condition of the army is, not a little has been said and written concerning our reserves, and the excellent service these could do if called upon to serve. To a certain extent this is true. If our battalions were more in numbers and in composition what they used to be a few years ago, the reserves would be of the greatest possible use in the event of a war. But in the first place they are not by a very great number as numerous as people believe them to be. If they were all called upon to-morrow, they could not give one hundred and fifty effective men to each battalion now on home service; and some of the latter require four or five hundred men at least before they could be called fit for service. And in the second place, supposing that every vacancy could be filled up by men of the reserve, what sort of a regiment would they be to command, of which a third, a half, or perhaps more were composed of men who knew as little of their officers as their officers knew of them? To absorb, so to speak, men of the reserve a battalion must be of a certain strength, and of this strength our regiments are not, nor anything like it.

Of the militia and volunteer corps I saw at Aldershot, I have not left myself space to write more than a very few words. The former I found wonderfully improved from what they used to be, and when under arms quite equal, in some respects superior as to stamina, &c., to their comrades of the line. The volunteers too are in every sense of the word far more effective than they were a few years ago. In looks, size, and all that causes a difference between strong men and weak boys, they are very superior to most—I might say to nearly all—the line regiments. If we had our regular army composed of such men as the volunteers I saw at Aldershot this summer, we should do well.

#### "CAREST THOU NOT?"

CAREST Thou not? oh Thou that givest life.

Carest Thou not? Who art the love Thou teachest.

While half Thy children perish in the strife,

For lack of the sweet charity Thou preachest.

The eye that sees, the heart that longs and yearns,

For beauty, wealth, and calm of golden hours;

Or Thou, or Nature, gave the brain that burns,

The mind that chafes to use its latent powers.

Caught in the bitter net of circumstance,

We strive and faint amid each baffling fold,

While careless fingers take, or miss, the chance,

Or idle with the precious thing they hold;

And favoured darlings of the world look down,

From the fair height by fate or birth-right given,

Wondering to see how under fortune's frown,

Along steep paths our tired feet are driven.

Carest Thou not? our prized ambitions fail.

Our dearest droop, in dull days shadowed too;

Their young eyes forced to read the weary tale,

While their vain struggles, our past pangs renew;

We fain would see, and save, and live, and laugh;

Fain would have honest heart and open hand;

Ah, hope and love make but a breaking staff,

When 'mid our shattered dreams alone we stand.

Carest Thou not, oh Lord? old age creeps on,

Blighting each lingering bloom we dare to cherish;

A little while, and the last day is done;

Carest Thou not, oh Lord, because we perish?

O stretch the right hand, strong to stay and save.

Speak, through wild winds above, wild seas

beneath;

Say, despite failing life and opening grave,

"Why will ye doubt, oh ye of little faith?"

#### AN ENGLISH SWELL-MOBSMAN'S EXPERIENCES IN AMERICA.

AN INTERVIEW WITH JUDGE LYNCH.

It happened in this way. Three of us had been to San Francisco, and having to leave in a hurry, one of our party named Charley failed to join us in time, and so I and my other comrade, George, came on east. But we did not go further than the pork city of Cincinnati, for we knew by various arrangements that we should hear of each other there, either by letter or otherwise. On entering the city my friend

separated from me, and we took up our abode at different hotels. I went to the Fountain House, and I met there a gentleman who was useful to me a few days afterwards. He was formerly a station-master on one of the South of England lines, with which I was also at one time officially connected, and my duties took me often to his station, and thus we became acquainted. He accepted a good offer of service in Canada on the Grand Trunk line, and when I met him, after twenty years' absence from England, he was manager of an important line in America. He left the hotel the next day. I reckon I was very lucky in having met him, and I was glad of his help sooner than I expected; in what manner you will see presently.

In two or three days I received a letter directing me to join at Louisville, for "it was not safe to come east," so said Charley, "for Pinkerton's men were on his track, and I must go to him to save our proceeds of the 'Frisco trip—fourteen hundred dollars—which he had in his possession."

I must mention here that Pinkerton is a private detective, whose agency embraces all the western states. He is a terror all over the West—not only to the thieves, but also to the United States' detectives.

Well, some of Pinkerton's men were on our track, and it was a great chance whether we reached home with the money. I looked up George, and told him to remain a day and then join me at Seamer on the Plains, because I had made up my mind to run back to Chicago and ascertain if Allen Pinkerton was there or not, for I feared no one but him. I accordingly started for Chicago. Knowing some of the detectives, I soon ascertained there was no cause for alarm. All was quiet; and they had no notice to be on the look out for any one coming east. I immediately took the cars south. I had a long journey before me, and towards night I arrived at the junction where George was to meet me. It was a small city on the plains, some one hundred miles distant from any other location. As George did not arrive by the evening train, due about nine o'clock, I enquired the time of the next Cincinnati through, and found it would be midnight. I looked about for an hotel; there were only two near the place, and these were merely for railway accommodation. I found it pretty full. A considerable crowd was waiting for the next train, and, after the manner of most Western

men, they were whiling away the time in card playing. Being a total stranger, the boss singled me out and interviewed me. We drank and chatted some time, when he proposed a walk, and he would show me the "city" by moonlight. After rambling some time, we came in sight of a gloomy building which attracted my attention, and in answer to my enquiry, he said it was the gaol, but it had been empty for many months, "for," he said, "I think we struck an all-fired terror among the boss thieves, and such like varmint, about these dig-gins."

"How so?" I said.

"Wall, Britisher, just you look here. It was a thing I would not talk of in my own house, for there was some on 'em had friends about here, and it somewhat riles 'em to hear it talked about; but I tell you, stranger, in a few words. Ye see them trees out there—two on 'em," and he pointed as he spoke to a couple of stunted trees. "Wall, on them trees one morning, Judge Lynch left fourteen bodies dangling for a caution to law-breakers. It were all there were in the gaol—eight black cusses and six white—and I, sir, was compelled to be one of the vigilance committee. You shall hear how it was: you have plenty of time, for the locomotive can be heard here many miles away, and I'll tell you in a few minutes."

"Go ahead," I said, "and don't spin it out, for I am thirsty." The fact is, I felt somewhat uncomfortable in thus rubbing shoulders with the veritable Jack Ketch.

My host continued his tale thus: "It was about nine months ago, just sich a night as this. The midnight train had gone out of the depôt, and I was about to close the doors of my shanty, when three tall strangers stepped up to the bar and called for drinks. 'What, missed the train?' said I, for I knew every one about our section.

"'Oh, no,' said one on 'em, 'I guess we'er in time;' and while he was speakin' another chap stalks in, closes the door, and says, 'Boss, how much rum have you got in the bar?'

"I said, 'about three gallons.'

"'Let's have it all, and be lively, and a couple of tumblers as well;' and turning to one of the first three said, 'Jack, you had better come with me and serve out the whisky to the boys; two will bring the boss along.'

"'What's up, chaps?' I cried: 'are you come to scare me? for if——' Before



I could say more, one of them spoke. 'Oh, no harm is intended you; you bring yer fixings with you, if you like; we want you for a witness with two or three of yer neighbours; we are V.C.s, and are come to carry out law and justice, which you are very slow about this side of the river.'

"I handed over the whisky and glasses, and two of the fellows left. Thinks I to myself, 'There must be a smartish crowd, by the quantity of rum they have got.'

"The two others then asked me if I would consent to come; they had sworn, however, to bring me.

"'I'd go by compulsion,' I said, 'but I set my hoof down upon it there and then, and I wouldn't put a hand to a rope or anything else.' But it was no use arguin', nor would they let me wake any of my neighbours or folks in the house.

"So away I went up the track towards the gaol, and then I saw the crowd on hossback, nigh upon a hundred, around the gaol. When we got up I seed two of my neighbours there, who had been forced to come like me. The Kentucks then made me knock the sheriff up, because he would not have opened the door to a stranger. When he opened the door the leaders pushed in and said, 'we want the three hoss thieves you have here.'

"Then you won't have 'em,' said the old man, 'unless you like to walk over my body.'

"It was no use the old man refusin' either to give up his men or his keys, or argufyin' with them tall chaps.

"By this time about fifty on 'em had dismounted, while the others held their hosses, and there warn't a man in the crowd under six foot among 'em. They raise 'em mighty tall where them come from, stranger. Wall, they seized the sheriff and locked him in his own room, took the keys, and brought the prisoners out one by one. But as they did not know the men they were arter, they took and hanged the lot, 'to save us the trouble,' they said. They bound each man, and then flung him on a bare-backed hoss, and had him beneath the tree where some on 'em were up fixin' the ropes. Then two Kentucks on hoss-back rode on each side, put the rope round the feller's neck, and then led the hoss away from under him. This they did in turns. Everyman had some hand in it. There warn't the least noise, no lights, nor a shot fired. Me and my neighbours stood some little distance, off

and when it was all over the same chaps as come into my bar marches us down the track about two miles, bids 'good mornin', and then struck off across the prairie to join the main body, who had all galloped away before.

"When we got back to the hotel it was daylight. We had struck off around the settlement, for none of us cared to pass by that night's horrible work. The first thing we did was to ring the fire-bell, which soon brought everybody out of their beds to learn that the vigilance committee and Judge Lynch had been at work."

By this time the host and I were standing outside of the hotel. He cautioned me not to mention the circumstance there, for, said he, "they calculated to be a bit civilized hereabout."

We entered the hotel and found the card playing still going on. The stakes were running high, causing a little excitement, which soon after was turned into a different direction. A telegram had been received at the depôt to the effect that our train would not be in before five or six o'clock in the morning. An accident had happened to the engine about sixty miles back on the track, which would necessitate some delay. Immediately this was announced there was a regular rush and scramble for the chairs and stools, as every available bed in the place was occupied. The billiard tables were quickly taken possession of, and some of the company even sought a quiet sleeping-berth on the floor under the "mahogany." The landlord promised to have breakfast ready for all hands before the car arrived, and all settled down quietly, except a few card-players, who preferred to continue their game.

Soon after five next morning bell and whistle announced the arrival of our train. With little delay every one jumped on board, and we were soon off. I did not see my friend George alight, and therefore concluded he had not come on. Wishing to secure a seat to myself in order to get a nap, I did not run through the cars to look for him, but made myself as comfortable as I could for two or three hours' sleep. The back of the seats in the cars are reversible, and you may turn them over at pleasure, so that you may have your face or back to the engine, as you please. There was not a great number in our car, about thirty—and those were mostly men who had been waiting over night at the same hotel as myself.

On the seat facing me one of the men, who had been gambling the better part of the night, stretched himself and was soon snoring. I dozed off myself for about an hour, as I suppose, when feeling cramped I got up to stretch myself, and in doing so I woke my vis-a-vis, who started up, and shouted, "I am robbed! you have got my wallet, you varmint."

At first I thought he was dreaming, but no, he shouted at the top of his voice, "pickpocket!" Of course all the car was immediately in an uproar. I told him he was a liar; I had not his pocket-book nor had I seen it.

I stepped back. I could see there was to be a fight, for I saw him thrust his right hand into his coat pocket. Drawing out a big "bowie," he rushed at me like mad. There is always a stove at each end of the cars, and a quantity of wood in billets of about two feet long. Backing to one of these piles I seized a billet, and as he came towards me I gave him a blow which nearly broke his arm. Down dropped the knife on the floor, but in a twinkling a dozen pistols were pointed at my head, and I was at the mercy of my excited fellow travellers.

In the meanwhile the train had been stopped, for on the first alarm of "pickpocket," the connecting-cord gave the signal to the driver to pull-up. Without much ado I was surrounded, pushed about, and thrown off the train-platform on to the plain. I was neither asked for, nor had the chance of giving a word of explanation. Two or three weeks previous on the Denver line they had lynched two New Yorkers for picking pockets. This affair was fresh in their minds, and, no doubt, suggested like treatment in my case. "Lynch the pickpocket! Lynch him!" passed from mouth to mouth, as they pushed me towards the nearest telegraph-post. Speedy preparations were being made to string me up, and I could see that unless the wallet was found, it was all up with me. My accuser had said in his clamour that he had lost about sixteen hundred dollars—a one thousand bill, three one hundreds, and the remainder small bills.

Now I knew that I had three one hundred dollar bills and a quantity of small, but I did not know the exact amount. I was afraid he would claim this, as they were shouting: "Search the varmint! Strip him, and string him up! Shoot the infernal Yank!"—which they supposed I was by the cut of my clothes.

Two or three had hold of me, and resistance I knew was useless, for they would have shot me down before I could draw my pistol. My would-be executioners had just taken off my coat and vest, when I glanced towards the cars, for I confess I was beginning to get a bit shaky, and was afraid that something more than a scare was intended me. Especially should the Texan, who had lost the money, claim mine, I felt they would make short work of me. So I looked towards the cars as though expecting someone to help me out of this scrape, and sure enough I saw the brakeman of the train and my friend George, of whose presence in the train I was ignorant, hurrying up. The former had something in his hand, which he held up and waved. It proved to be the lost pocket-book, which he had found between the seats where the Texan and I had been stretched out.

George, it appears, had been asleep, and knew nothing of the affair until someone woke him to witness the fun of seeing a thievish Yank dangle from a telegraph-post. When he saw me stripped in the midst of a crowd, he made motions for me not to recognise him, because he naturally supposed I had been up to something. He soon took in the situation. I gave him a sign that I was innocent, which made him jump up in the air, pull out his pistol, and take his stand alongside of me in a moment, for the crowd had left me, and I was dressing myself.

"What's up?" said he. "Don't be familiar:" this sotto voce.

"The loafer accuses me of taking his poke, and now they have found it. I give you my word I have never seen it before, or touched the man."

"Hold hard," he cried, "I'll make him squeak. I think I know his game."

Here George was cut short by another rush towards me; but, stepping in front of me, he shouted: "Here, hold on, gentlemen; there has been enough of this. You have ill-treated this man quite enough. He is a foreigner, and is travelling for his pleasure; and evidently he is an English gentleman; and I am a Yank, a down-easter, and will stand by him, and see that he is not abused; and I can hold my own with any of you."

Then turning to me he said: "Put your back against that post, captain, and shoot anyone down that attempts to lay hand on you."

I complied by picking up my pistol and

traps, and moved backwards to my post, and waited events. I had been in two or three free fights with George. I knew very well that he did not care a button for the whole lot now that he had my word I was entirely innocent of the charge, and therefore I could trust to his pluck and discretion. He knew the men better than I did, and how to handle them.

After he had told me what to do, he strode into the crowd, and said: "New, gentlemen, what's afresh?"

"Why," said one, "the man has lost a thousand dollar bill out of his wallet."

Well this was a mystery and a startler; it made the case look blacker; it appeared to show that the pocket-book had been taken, the note abstracted, and then, in trying to replace the book, the thief had aroused the sleeper.

But my friend George took a different view of the matter. It occurred to him that there were several gamblers and sharpers together, and that their little game was to levy blackmail upon me, for he was quite aware that the Mississippi River gamblers would sacrifice two or three lives for a thousand dollars. Acting upon this suspicion he called me into the crowd and asked me: "Did you see these gentlemen a gamblin' last night?"

"Yes," I answered, "they were playing the better part of the whole night."

Then, turn turning to the man that had lost the bill, he asked: "Who are you anyway, stranger? Does anyone know you here?"

"Ya-as," said one little man who looked like a racoon, "I do; he's a respectable man from Galveston, and so am I."

"Are you!" said George. "You run in couples I see. Now we'll see if one of you two hasn't got the bill, which I very much suspect you have; and now as you have searched this gentleman, I propose that both you and your friend submit to the same indignity." Then turning to the guard of the train he said: "Conductor, it is your duty to protect your passengers, and see they ar'n't insulted; and if these here gentlemen are what they represent, they will not have any objection to their pockets being turned inside out to give all parties satisfaction, and if anyone wishes to know who and what I am there are my credentials." And pulling out his pocket-book he took out a parchment document bearing a major's commission in a New York regiment in which he had served all through the war. And this document I

assure you was not a sham, or fraudulently obtained; it was perfectly bonâ fide.

This little manœuvre, he told me afterwards, was done to give him time to turn the tables completely on the Southerners.

Then turning to the little Texan, and imitating his squeaking voice: "Now, kernal, what do you say?"

"Sarch me!" shouted the imp; for he was the fellow that cut down the cord in the cars and brought it out for my benefit.

"Sarch me, sir!" And he jumped as though a snake had bitten him. "Sarch me! do you calculate the consequences?"

"Oh, ya—as, kernal. What size ball does your shootin'-iron take?"

"One small enough to hit a squirrel in the eye, and large enough to bring a Yankee to his knees," said the little spit-fire as cool as possible, yet with fire sparkling in his eyes, for George had stung him sharply. He then turned to the conductor and said: "Have the kindness to sarch my pockets, sir; and ef you find a thousand dollar bill on me I'll eat it, and my boots in the bargain."

Meanwhile the crowd had quite turned in favour of the movement proposed by George, and already two or three had taken my hand, and had offered me their whisky-flasks, which I was not loth to accept, for after passing such a night, and then being stripped on the plains early in the morning, I felt very chilly indeed.

When the little man turned to the conductor in the way I have mentioned, his companion—the loser of the note—chimed in: "I am perfectly satisfied to be sarched. I can't turn my pockets out myself, for the Britisher has so hurt my arm that I can't lift it up."

This just suited George's plan, as he particularly wished to search this fellow himself. So turning up his sleeve like a conjuror on a stage he proceeded to examine the man's pockets. He first turned out the vest pockets, and then took the man's wallet from his breast pocket and turned that inside out, when down fell a crumpled piece of paper. It was immediately picked up by one of the by-standers, unrolled, and found to be a thousand dollar bill. On holding it up there was a scene, and no mistake.

"Well, my friend," said George, "I thought you said you had but one bill for a thousand last night, and that you lost that to-day in the cars: now whose bill is this?"

The man was dumbfounded; he seemed more surprised than anyone. At length



he stammered: "I don't know what to say. I am mighty sorry this has happened. I must have put the bill in my pocket first, before I put in the wallet. I should have found it before now ef I could have raised my arm to have drew it down to the bottom. But I was in too great a hurry, and have got a broken arm for my pains."

To see the effect the finding of the bill had upon the little Texan would make a pig laugh. He flew at his friend and said: "I've bin playin' and travellin' with a fool, sir—an egregious ass, and might have repented all my life for meddlin' with your bizniss." Then facing George like a caged rat: "Wall, major!"

"Wall, kernal," drawled George, "ef I had found that bill on you I should have sent your ears home in your boots. I am glad it is not so."

"Then, sir," said the little fellow, taking off his hat and bowing like a dancing master, "we shall have the pleasure of meetin' again."

"Jess so, kernal." And then turning to me, now that it was all over, George said: "I guess, captain, you have had enough of the present company. Do you proceed by the cars?"

From the way in which he spoke I knew he meant me to answer no; therefore I said: "I certainly prefer the plains, if I have to walk fifty miles, to riding any further in such company."

The crowd had by this time slunk away quite ashamed of the part they had taken in the affair, with the exception of one or two, and the conductor who was begging me to get on board, since he had lost nearly an hour, for which he would be brought to book, and would require some of us to exonerate him. I gave him my baggage ticket, and told him to send my valise to the Galt House, for I should not go further with him: "I prefer to walk on until the next train passes."

"I'm afraid that will be late in the day, sir," said he, "and it is fifty or sixty miles to the next settlement, so you have a long walk; however, keep fast on to the track, sir, and don't stray from it on no account, especially ef a train don't pick you up before dark."

"Thank you; but before you start, if you have any whisky on board, hand it out, will you?"

"Sartinly, sir; it is a good remedy for snake bites," he said laughingly. "I hope you won't fall across any."

George also commissioned him to take

charge of his travelling-bag. "For," said he, "I don't intend to desert this gentleman until I see him safe in Nashville, therefore I shall keep him company."

The conductor then mounted his train and was about being followed by the others who had remained with us, when one of them turned to me, and holding out his hand, said: "I am exceeding sorry that this unpleasant affair has occurred. I hope you will not let any prejudicial impression remain in your mind regarding us. Rely upon it, it was not an intentional mistake."

"Do you think not, sir?" said George. "Excuse my abruptness, but do you think these two men are Southern gentlemen, whom I proposed to search?"

"I think they are respectable citizens, sir."

"In that case, I guess I shall see the little fellow again, without doubt."

"Yes, major, I think you will." Then shaking hands with George, he said, "I shall remain at the Galt House for a few days, major. I daresay we have met before on the battle-field, though on different sides; but I trust our national difficulties, which are happily settled, will not interfere with individual friendship; therefore, if you should require a friend in Louisville, you can command me." So saying he handed George his card, with the further remark, "I am much mistaken if the Galveston man does not mean to have a pop at you."

"Thanks," said George, "if such should be the case, I shall avail myself of your kindness. Au revoir."

While they were talking, I wrote on a card the name of the gentleman whom I had met at Cincinnati, who happened to be officially connected with this line of railway, and was living at Louisville. I handed the card to the Southerner, begged him as a favour to step into the manager's office and explain what had taken place, giving at the same time my name, and to ask that some horses or a spare locomotive be sent to pick us up, as the prospect of a night's camping out without provisions was by no means pleasant. This he promised to do. The conductor then started his train, and left us standing alone on the vast prairie. The sun was mounting the eastern sky, and gave every indication of a fine warm day. Overhead the sky was beautifully clear, while at our feet lay an ocean of grass which seemed to stretch to a boundless distance. There was nothing

to break that vast expanse save the telegraph posts that lined the track.

After lighting a cigar, George looked at me, and began a string of questions. "How in the name of all that is mysterious came this about? What on earth has delayed you? Why arn't you in Louisville?" &c.

"I'll answer you in true Yankee style by asking you the same questions; and why not go on with the cars instead of turning Red Indian on the war trail? However, old boy, you have done me a good turn, and very probably saved my neck from a very unpleasant cravat."

"Ya—as, ya—as; I know what you would say, captin; but we air a thousand out of pocket."

"That which we never had we cannot have lost."

"Why that thousand dollar bill which that fellow has walked off with is mine."

"Yours! What do you mean?"

"Ya—as; I put it in his pocket when I took his wallet out, and then turned it on the ground. I could not see any other way to get you out of the scrape, nohow; because you know, captin, I did not see the beginning of the affair."

"Well, by jingo! it was a risky business. If the bill which he had lost had been a new one, or vice versa, why they would have known that we were confederates."

"Ah! jess so; then we would have had to fight the lot, and get rubbed out, I guess. My idea is, captin, they are river gamblers, crossing the plains to take the boat up: ef so, we've seen the last of 'em; ef not, the worst is to come. They took it too quiet for me. I hope the feller with the bill is convinced he has his own in his pocket, and that he has accused you unjustly. Now the risk of this is the reason why I didn't wish you to go on with the cars, so that I might find an excuse of stoppin' with you. As to the little viper—why, I must keep my eye open; and ef he calls me out, I must shoot him, or he will me. Well, that don't trouble me much. Now, let us tramp on; a good walk won't hurt us. We shall be picked up in the course of the day, I reckon. You see that black pencilled line ahead on the edge of the horizon, that is timber if I mistake not; we must make that afore the sun gits too hot, and that is about twenty miles, I guess."

So tucking our pants into our boots we struck out with a will for the timber. As we went along I told George what had

happened, and where I had been. While recounting the landlord's lynching tale, a circumstance struck me that I did not mention before. After our moonlight walk, and before we entered the hotel, he stated, by way of showing me the honesty of the neighbourhood, "Here is a big bill—a thousand; ef I was to throw that on the track, no one would pick it up, or ef they did, would advertise it directly." The fact of his singling me out, and leaving the house at the height of business, and having seen him previously sitting with the card players, I came to the conclusion that he was a sharp fellow, and there was more in it than I could see. George thought the same, and promised to pay him a visit, though he entirely corroborated the tale of the lynching of those fourteen wretches that terrible night.

George then told me what had caused his delay, and how he became possessed of so much spare cash. "After you left me in Cincinnati," he said, "I had plenty of time on hand, and thought I would go and 'fight the tiger' for an hour or two. So I looked over the treasury, and found I could spare a twenty-dollar bill, and therefore I popped it up to Mike Donovan's. There I had such a run of luck that I let my train go. Ef I had left off earlier I should have been five instead of three thousand in pocket; but that greaser has taken one away and left me with two, captin; and I would give a big slice out of one of 'em to be in Louisville, for we shall have rain, I'm afraid."

I looked in the direction to which he was pointing, but I saw only wind-clouds. "No; it will be only wind," I said, "and it will be much pleasanter walking, as the sun will be scorching presently." Then continuing our conversation: "Well, old boy, the breach of our rule not to play until the business in hand is done with has been to some purpose for once. I certainly shall repay you that thousand when we meet Charley, and even then I shall remain greatly in your debt."

"No; no such thing—don't think of it. Didn't you do more for me on the Hudson when we had to take water for it, and when you larnt me to swim?" broke in George with a laugh. "That was a tighter go than this, I guess."

He was alluding to a little affair we had on the Hudson river, when we had to jump off the boat and swim for it; and when, as he was no swimmer, I had some difficulty in saving him from drowning.

After a tramp of two hours we drew near to the timber, sufficiently near to distinguish the trees. I was in hopes we should find some water, as I was very thirsty, and could not drink the fiery stuff which the conductor had given me for whisky. Resuming our conversation I said: "We shall meet a train before one overtakes us, I am thinking, George. Now don't you think, if there is trouble ahead, you had better take that one back. I don't like the idea of your going on, because no one will think of interfering with me. I shall pass as a tourist, and my old friend the manager will enable me to relieve Charley of his responsibility, and then I will hasten on to New York and join you."

"Well, my sage philosopher, I know you think 'tis folly to court danger. I don't seek it myself, I can assure you; but this is how it stands. The little toad of a Texan has got my name, and ef I don't face the music arter what has passed, he'll post it all over the Union by a slip in a Louisville paper, with "please copy" interspersed, and then I shall have a dozen rows in different parts of the States. No; Excelsior's the motto, captin."

"So let it be," I replied, "but I do hope it will be none of the knife, which they are so fond of in Texas."

"I'll give you my word I'll not interfere with our bizniss by seekin' him or havin' any quarrel. Ef he wishes to interview me in a wood or on a plain, I shall have choice of weapons, and with the rifle you know what sort of a shot I am."

So it was settled that onward we should press, and about mid-day we skirted the wood. Halting here, I threw myself down on the grass, resolved, come what might, to wait for succour. George struck into the wood to look for water, as we were both parched with thirst, which our whisky only increased instead of allaying. I took off my felt hat, poured some whisky in the crown, and then put some short grass into it by way of experiment. I was astonished to find how much of the fire and strength it took out of it. George returned after a fruitless search and said: "The first water we shall strike will be the Ohio river, I'm thinkin'."

As I lay on the ground I heard a thump, thump; I thought it was my own heart beating loudly from over-exertion in walking, but as I sat up I distinctly heard it, and shouted, "the Bulgine, old man; I can hear it miles away." George was incredulous, but lying on the ground in

Indian fashion, he could distinctly hear the beat of the locomotive. We knew it would be a long while before it came up to where we were, but we made preparations to stop it. George went back to the timber and returned with a couple of branches, and on these tied our handkerchiefs—one on each side of the track. In course of time the train drew near and pulled up at the sight of our signals. We jumped on board and were soon refreshed by a good drink of ice water and a sandwich. We were met by a good deal of questioning and joking as to what brought us out in the prairie prospecting. "Was it oil? Snakes? Gold? Injins?" &c. I left George in the smoking car to answer all enquiries and enjoy his cigar, and betook myself to another one, where I soon fell fast asleep, and only awoke to find the cars entering the depôt of Nashville. We took the ferry boat across the river to Louisville, and on the platform met the manager, the Southern gentleman—a New Orleanist I discovered—who had offered his services to my companion and my own "bête noir," who had caused all the annoyance. My friend, the manager, said it was his intention, if we had not come by that train, to have started with a locomotive and brought us in. The Galveston gentleman, who had his arm in a sling, made all the apologies a man could do under the circumstances. We all adjourned to the Galt House, and over a bottle or two of champagne settled everything amicably so far as I was concerned. George left me and went, as usual, to another hotel. Nothing was said of the little man, and I thought we had heard the last of him.

At night Charley, who was staying at the Galt, came to my room with George, and we settled up our business. The former had brought our money and goods all right, and of course had a long tale to tell, but as there was more of fear than pluck in his composition, I felt sure he had given us a long and unpleasant journey which might have been avoided. When he heard what had happened en route, he was ready to pack up and be off by the first train that left the city, more especially as he had not been idle, but had cut out some work for me and George, that would have turned out well I have no doubt, but we could not entertain the scheme now after the notoriety we had gained. Charley therefore resolved to return to his family for two or three weeks, and to await instructions when we were ready to raise



the hatchet again. He said he should take the up river boat early in the morning, and so he shook hands and bade us good-bye.

After his departure I handed George his share of the spoil, with the thousand he had given away on the plains. "I am glad that cur is gone," he said. "We have a great deal to do. Put the money in your pocket, I may not want it. I have been interviewed by a friend of the little fellow, and he would like an apology or a meetin', and the New Orleanist has gone to fix the locality. I have put myself in his hands, but no apology on no account. So you'll cross early in the morning to Nashville, take the traps and wait events, Jack, will ye?"

"I shall do no such thing. I know more of these affairs than you think. He can have as many friends as he likes there, but I must be with you. How do you know who this Mr. Randolph of New Orleans is, that you should trust your life in his hands? He is only a casual acquaintance, not known enough to justify such a serious responsibility. No, I can trust my friend the manager, and leave the traps with him."

"As you will. Send for him, and I'll write a line or two and stay here to-night."

I went in search of him and found him in the billiard-room. Calling him into the corridor, I requested him to come up to my room and have a glass and a cigar. There we found the New Orleans man. Telling him I knew his mission I said, "I intend making one of the party, and I must trust my Louisville friend, whom I had known many years, to get us away and take charge of our baggage."

He replied that he had also proposed that there should be two friends on each side, which was agreed to, and that the meeting should take place at noon on the following day, some eight miles down the stream. The weapon selected was the rifle.

The manager informed us that a boat passed down stream in the afternoon, and that a train left Nashville at five o'clock, so that we could either jump on board the boat and go south, or return and go east by rail before the affair got wind, and thus escape the sheriffs. Mr. Randolph gave George and me an invitation for a week or two at New Orleans, if we chose to go that way.

Everything having been settled, our friends departed with a hearty shake of the hand and good wishes:

We sat up for some time talking about

the issues of the morrow. George gave me a letter with instructions how to dispose of his property should he be unfortunate in the coming duel. For myself I was very sad that night for I thought a good deal of him, and he was such a good-hearted, plucky fellow that I prayed—if thoughts and expressed wishes such as mine could be called a prayer—that he might not come to harm.

How matters turned out on the following day, an extract from a Louisville paper published the day afterwards will show:

#### "THE DUELLO."

"A duel arose out of an unpleasant affair that occurred the other day on the C. and L. track, wherein an English gentleman was rather roughly handled through a very unfortunate mistake made by a fellow-traveller. Two of the parties in the crowd quarrelled and met yesterday down stream—a Major W—, from Boston, Mass., and a Mr. B—, from Galveston, Texas. They fought with the rifle at a hundred yards' distance. There was but one shot each exchanged, both of which took effect. The Galveston man rolled over with a shattered right knee, while the friends of the major bound up a wounded left arm. Honour being thus satisfied, the parties engaged went south by the river steamer."

Thus ended the trip which brought me in contact with Judge Lynch.

#### THE BLACK FLAG.

WHAT I have to tell happened full forty years ago. I am an old man now, and time, mercifully, has blunted the pain that half-maddened me when the sting of the bitter wound was fresh and new. I can bear, now, to look calmly on the faded ink of the old diary, the first entry in which records how I, Rodney Carew, late a lieutenant in one of the smartest of our marching regiments, had, after some dangle about the British Embassy at Pera, obtained the coveted post of Military Instructor, with the Turkish rank of Bimbashi or Major, to the garrison of Smyrna. Those were the days when the bold experiment by which Sultan Mahmoud established European drill and discipline in his army, and massacred the fanatic Janissaries who claimed to be the privileged champions of the Porte, was not yet thoroughly successful, and officers were urgently needed to train the newly raised troops of what we called the

regular army, and the Turks knew by the name of the Nizam Djedid.

At Smyrna there exists a large Christian population, and in especial a number of wealthy European merchants, whose white villas and terraced gardens stud the shores of the sweeping bay. One of the richest and most respected of these was Mr. Lisle, and with his only daughter, whom I frequently met at dances and picnic parties, I fell in love, and presently found my love returned. Annie—my own Annie! Even after all these years the memory of her bright eyes, of that sweet voice that to my ear was music, of that lovely, innocent face, comes back to me as if all the dreary time had been a dream! The course of true love, in our case, as in so many others, had not at first run smoothly. Mr. and Mrs. Lisle had different views for their daughter than to let her marry a handsome young fellow with but a hundred a year beyond his pay. And I cannot blame them. I was, in a worldly point of view, a sadly ineligible suitor, and it was only when Annie grew pale and wan, and her bright looks and girlish spirits began to fade, that her parents were induced to accept me as a son-in-law.

When once our betrothal was a settled thing, we were the happiest of the happy, secure of the enduring affection of each other, and with the fairest prospects opening out before us, since Mr. Lisle's intention was, so soon as Annie and I were married, to take me into partnership, and, in time, to make over to me the management of his London house of business. Then it was that alarming rumours of an outbreak of plague at Constantinople came to our ears in Smyrna. It had been brought over land, so it was said, by some Persian merchants, and was raging in the capital, and thence spreading into the provinces. Now Smyrna, nestling on its hillside, and with none of those swampy pastures and cane jungles near it which are nurseries of fever in the Levant, is one of the most healthy of Oriental cities; nevertheless, few hoped, and none believed, that we should escape our share of the coming visitation. Annie, in particular, was nervously anxious regarding the pestilence so near our gates. She was sure, she said, the plague would come; sure, too, that she should die of it. I, who feared it but little, did my best to lough her out of her apprehensions.

Weeks elapsed, and nothing occurred to justify the fears which had prevailed when first the report of sickness at Constantinople was bruited abroad. One day, however,

while in company with the English Consul and a couple of our travelling countrymen, rarities in the East in those days, when the swift packets of the P. and O. were as yet undreamed of, I was rambling through the bazaars of the town, then, as ever, crowded with supple Jews and greasy Armenians, fierce-eyed mountaineers with an armoury of daggers and pistols around their waists, and patient turbaned traders who told their amber beads while waiting for customers, I heard a hoarse shout rise upon the sultry summer air. My companions looked around surprised, so oddly did such an outcry suit with the usual sleepy hum and suppressed murmur of the place.

"It is nothing," said the Consul, who who had been twenty years at Smyrna, and was a hackneyed observer of the oriental sights and sounds that to the rest of us were yet new and fresh. "Some rich Bey, perhaps, who tosses silver among the mob on the occasion of a marriage feast, or a preaching dervish who has made a point in his sermon that touches the Believers to the quick. It takes something of that sort to disturb the Moslem's phlegm." And then we strolled on, gazing at the motley throng, and the camels passing by in ghostly file and with noiseless tread, until a second shout, and a third, aroused our curiosity and made us hurry to the gate of the bazaar, where we found ourselves mingling with a crowd that filled every hilly street and open space, all eyes bent towards the sea, while ejaculations of dismay and koran verses resounded on all sides.

"By Jove, but it is!" exclaimed the Consul, as he brought his pocket telescope to bear upon the object of the popular scrutiny. "It's the Stamboul mail-boat coming in with a black flag flying. They've got the plague on board—never a doubt of it."

We, too, could plainly see the sailing packet which afforded them the only means of postal communication with Constantinople, a large barque, standing into the bay, under a cloud of canvas, and with the fatal black flag at her main peak. As she approached, rosaries were told, prayers muttered, and a perceptible shudder ran through the crowd, while the Consul, as he closed his glass, muttered to us:

"It's an ugly job, but we must hope for the best. The vessel is making for the lazaretto, and the quarantine regulations are strict enough, if observed, to prevent mischief. The worst of it is, that bribery and backsheesh ride roughshod over all rules."

So far as I was concerned, my only anxiety was for the alarm which the arrival of the grisly visitant would occasion to Annie Lisle. As early as my duties would permit I rode out to Bournabat, to break the news to my betrothed as gently as I could, but ill-tidings, as I found, had once again proved their unwelcome ability to fly fast, and the little foreign colony was all astir with the excitement caused by the intelligence. I found Annie very pale and frightened, Mr. Lisle serious, and Mrs. Lisle annoyed. There had been no outbreak of the pest in Smyrna for years past, and some of the European merchants seemed almost to resent as a personal affront and injury this untoward event. It was most unlikely, however, that the plague should reach the healthy and out-lying suburb in which the Lisles dwelt, and having done my best to comfort Annie, I rode back to Smyrna.

To my surprise, at the door of the house in which I lodged stood a swarthy sergeant, whom I knew well, leaning against the door-post of creamy marble, and smoking his long chibouque with its stem of lilac-wood and its bowl of yellow Tchoulou clay. The man drew himself up and saluted, lowering his pipe and lifting his outspread hand to his red tarboosh with the brass crescent and tassel of dull purple.

"Why, Selim, what is the matter?" I asked.

"Orders, English lord, from the general himself," answered the sergeant, again saluting respectfully at mention of his superior's name. "You are wanted, Effendi, to go at once to the lazaret, and take command of the guard stationed there. It has been doubled, and we have chosen the best men, Bismillah, to make up the number."

As he spoke, he held out to me a paper covered with crabbed Turkish characters, whereby I was duly called upon to exercise all proper vigilance with regard to the custody of the voyagers in quarantine, and to prevent all unauthorised communication between them and the shore, &c. It was a tedious and disagreeable task, but not one which I could justly complain of having assigned to me, since we were, just then, very short of efficient officers, colonel and majors being absent on the very elastic leave then granted by the Seraskierate to those who had full purses or court influence, and a few hardworking captains and subalterns being left to drudge through the round of regimental routine.

"They have the plague among them,

poor wretches?" said I, as I accompanied the sergeant to the wharf where a boat was in waiting to convey us to the lazaretto.

"Yes, English Effendi," replied Selim, with a Mussulman's serene philosophy; "and, if it be heaven's will, the Armenian gravediggers will soon be busy in Smyrna. Two merchants, with their goods, have found means to bribe the quarantine guardians, and have got themselves rowed ashore. But, unless it be written on our foreheads, not a hair of our heads, as you know, Effendi, can come to harm."

This was startling news, and it was fully confirmed by the raw subaltern whom I came to relieve, and who was terribly frightened lest the general should select him as a scapegoat for the sins of his subordinates.

"A man cannot be all eyes, Effendi," said the poor fellow, apologetically, as he stepped into his boat, and I, who knew how potent is bribery in the East, could not help pitying him, great as might have been the mischief of which he had inadvertently been the cause. Although doubtful as to whether I might not, according to the homely adage, be busy in shutting the door when the steed was stolen, I neglected no precaution, doubling sentries, establishing patrols, and sending a musket shot across the bows of any boat that hovered suspiciously near the secluded spot of which I was temporary custodian.

There are pleasanter places than the old lazaret of Smyrna, a patch of rocky ground, near the Point, palisaded to keep it from the meadows beyond, where sheep fed and buffaloes browsed, and partially occupied by two ranges of tumbledown buildings, in the larger of which, with the guardians who waited on them, were lodged the detained travellers, while the other was assigned to the officer and soldiers on guard. Of the passengers on board the Stamboul packet I saw nothing, and only heard, briefly, from the overworked Greek doctor, that two were dead and three dying, but that the others, as from some apparent caprice of the disorder often happens, showed no signs of having caught the epidemic.

"They have it, hot and hot, in Smyrna now," said the young captain who came, on the sixth day, to relieve me of my troublesome task. "Three hundred died on Wednesday, and four hundred, they say, yesterday; but on my word, Carew, you look ill yourself. If I were you, as soon as I got back to quarters, I would see the doctor."



I did feel ill. My head throbbed painfully, and coloured lights danced strangely before my eyes, so that, long before the boat touched the quay, the fear, the certainty, that the viewless contagion had marked me for a victim, forced itself upon me, and before evening I lay on a bed in the crowded hospital, with just enough consciousness to be aware that I was stricken down by plague. And then delirium set in, and I remember no more.

It was a strange scene which presented itself before my bewildered eyes when first, semi-conscious, but with the dulled and patient curiosity of a sick man, I looked out upon the crowded ward of the great hospital in which I lay. The khana itself, like most public edifices built by the Ottoman Government, was of noble dimensions, vast, massive, and spacious. But the great rooms were gaunt and bare, and bedding, furniture, skilled attendance were left to chance or to destiny. Thus, beside a neat brass bedstead would be placed a rough litter of boards, propped upon empty oil-jars, and, just beyond, a heap of barley straw, whereon lay, grand in its uncomplaining passiveness, some helpless form with turbaned head and pallid face that looked the whiter by contrast with the jetty beard and sable brows. A few overworked doctors of various nationalities glided at intervals through the throng of prostrate sufferers, while the nurses' all-important duty seemed to be left to such female relatives of the sick as had dared to run the risk of contagion, or, in the case of Christian patients who had no wife or mother to tend them in the awful hour, to certain nuns, some Romish, others Greek, in their heavy woollen draperies of white or dark blue. And here and there rose from without the well-known melancholy dirge of the hired singers at funerals, as some corpse, flower-decked, and laid on an improvised bier, was hurried away towards the cemetery that almost crowns the hill to which Smyrna clings.

But presently I thought that my brain had reeled, and the delirious dream set in again; for to my surprise I saw a slender female figure draw nigh to the bed on which I lay, with throbbing temples and powerless limbs, and take what was evidently its accustomed seat beside it.

"Annie!" I exclaimed, my parched lips almost refusing to utter the faint sound; "Annie!"

And then the beautiful girlish face was bent over me, with a sort of joyful wonder

in the large eyes, and Annie Lisle fell on her knees beside the bed, and thanked God, in her sweet childish accents, for my recovery.

"I have watched so long," she said, as she settled the pillow beneath my aching head, "but you did not know me; but now you will get well, dear, so very soon."

And her tears rained on my face, while I, remembering her terror of the plague, could hardly believe the evidence of my senses.

"You have been nursing me, dearest Annie—you!" said I; "and were you not afraid?"

With a quick, soft touch, and a glorious smile on her pale mouth, she interrupted me.

"Not afraid," she answered. "Once I knew that you were ill, Rodney, I forgot fear."

But for Annie's gentle ministrations I have no doubt I should have died. There was no Red Cross Society in those days in ambulance or hospital, and who would have cared to tend the English Protestant, as he lay tossing on his bed of pain? Yet, when I saw how white and tired the dear girl looked, my heart smote me, and I looked around with repugnance and apprehension at the hideous scenes of suffering, death, and wailing by which we were surrounded.

"Annie, Annie!" I exclaimed, half-reproachfully, "how could you, so tenderly nurtured, so sheltered from the ills of life, come to so dreadful a place. And how could Mr. and Mrs. Lisle——"

She put her white hand gently across my lips, and signed to me to be silent, while she poured out a glass of cooling sherbet and offered it to me, supporting my languid head with the strength that love lends. And it was not till later that I learned how fruitless and how urgent had been the efforts of Annie's parents to overrule her resolve to nurse me back to life and health when she heard that I lay alone in the Plague Hospital of Smyrna.

I recovered rapidly, and was soon pronounced out of immediate danger and fit to be removed far from the hideous sights and sounds of the khana to one of those cottages, clean and airy, and surrounded by olives and fig-trees, in which respectable Levantines, during the sultry heats of midsummer, find an escape from the oppressive atmosphere of the town. I was very weak, but convalescent; and Annie parted from me sorrowfully, regret-

ting that we were not married, so that she might have gone with me into the country, but bidding me be a good boy, and soon come to Bournabat—as soon as the doctor would allow. So we separated, Annie Lisle going home, and I being conveyed in a hired Turkish araba to the tiny house I was to inhabit, where the good-natured Greek gardener and his old wife did their best to take care of me.

The pure air, the blessed calm of that peaceful spot, where few sounds broke the silence save the heavy hum of the summer insects, and the lazy rustle of the olive-boughs as the breeze stirred their crisp foliage, brought back my health; but I was still very weak when I decided on quitting the quiet retreat which had been my temporary home, and returning to Smyrna and my duty. With some difficulty I mounted my horse, which an orderly had brought from barracks in compliance with a message from me, and bidding a kind farewell to my late hosts, rode off towards the city. My spirits rose as I felt the sea-wind fan my cheek, pale and thin from the results of recent illness. My intention was to report myself to the commanding officer, and request an extension of my sick-leave, which no doubt would be granted. Then I should be free to spend my leisure hours at Bournabat, in the society of Annie Lisle. Dear, sweet Annie! Short was the time—a few brief weeks, perhaps—which intervened between that moment and the happy day when I could claim her as my wife, and—Ha! what is that crowd that blocks the road from Bournabat, so that I draw rein, while Mustapha, my orderly, spurs on to clear the way for his officer's passage? The soldier rides back. "It is a funeral, Effendi—a Frankish funeral bound for the Christians' burying-ground. The daughter of a rich Ingliz, they say."

A shudder, I knew not why, ran through me, and, dashing my spurs into my horse's sides, I darted forward, and mingled with the crowd of spectators. Yes; there was the coffin, draped with black and strewed with flowers—white flowers, in memory of the maiden dead—borne on men's shoulders; while behind it, heading the procession of mourners, walked with slow step, and stern, sorrowful faces, Mr. Lisle and his wife, Annie's mother. They saw me, but they made no sign of recognition,

but passed on. And then the dreadful conviction that this was Annie's funeral, that Annie was dead, forced itself upon me as if some fiend had shrieked the horrid tidings in my ears, and then a cloud of darkness flitted before my eyes, and I fell fainting from my horse.

The next thing which I remember is that I was lying on my bed in my own lodgings at Smyrna, Mustapha the soldier standing immovable by the door, the Italian doctor feeling my pulse, and two Englishmen, one of whom was the consul, looking down at me with pitying faces. From them I learned the truth. Annie Lisle was dead, and dead of the plague, the infection of which would probably (since there were no other cases among the members of the foreign colony in Bournabat) never have reached her but for the daring devotion of her conduct in nursing me as I lay helpless in the Smyrna hospital. While my convalescence had progressed, she had sickened of the mortal disorder, and in spite of all that care and skill could do had died, mingling, as I learnt afterwards, my name with her dying prayer.

I have little more to tell. I was ill, I know, after the cruel shock which had blighted all my dearest hopes; and when, a month later, I applied for admission at the door of Annie's forlorn home, it was as a broken man, with haggard face and hair streaked with grey, that I entered Bournabat. But Annie's parents refused to see me. All their old enmity to me had been revived, and they regarded me but as the cause of their daughter's death. I resigned my post, and left Smyrna for ever; but, waking or sleeping, the memory of my lost Annie has never long been absent from my thoughts through all these weary years that I have walked the world alone.

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